



**Name of Project:** Aging & Disability Resource Consortium Serving Northeastern Massachusetts

**Name of Organization:** Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley, Inc & The Northeast Independent Living Program, Inc.  
Lawrence, MA

**Principle of Choices for Independence:** Empowerment/Access to Information and Services

### **Description**

Massachusetts has utilized Aging & Disability Resource Centers (ADRC) to help empower individuals to make informed decisions about their care options.

As a 2003 ADRC grantee, Massachusetts piloted an ADRC in the northeastern region of Massachusetts through a collaboration of two independent organizations: *Elder Services of Merrimack Valley* (ESMV) and the *Northeast Independent Living Program* (NILP). The ESMV serves as the Aging Service Access Point and as an Area Agency on Aging. The NILP is a consumer controlled independent living center providing advocacy and services to people with all disabilities who wish to live independently in the community.

Each of these organizations had already established a visible community presence prior to the ADRC grant. However, ESMV and NILP have traditionally served different populations. Nevertheless, they quickly discovered that these populations shared many common goals such as maintaining independence, the need for objective information and consumer control. In addition, these populations' shared similar barriers to services such as transportation, housing, or the need for assistive technology.

In the first year of the ADRC grant, a coordinated intake and referral process was developed and utilized by a team of information & assistance workers from the pilot agencies who provide comprehensive and coordinated information, referral and case management. ADRC partners were cross-trained to ensure timely and appropriate transfer of information and resources, as well as educated about the service systems and different eligibility criteria for serving elders and younger persons with disabilities.

The goal was not to merge the two organizations, but to draw from the expertise and experience of both and increase coordination between them for the benefit of all consumers. In essence, a “no wrong door” model was created where regardless of which organization was initially contacted, the consumer would have a similar experience in terms of obtaining information, assistance and access to services. Work is still underway to fully replicate and refine the model in this region. However, the goal is to development the availability of ADRCs statewide.

For more information on Massachusetts Aging and Disability Resource Center initiative, please contact: Heather Johnson-Lamarche, ADRC Project Director, at 802-879-1338 or [heather.johnson-lamarche@adelphia.net](mailto:heather.johnson-lamarche@adelphia.net).